

Honorable legislators serving on the Education Committee

I am retired from owning a landscape design/build firm and Garden Center called the Kent Greenhouse in Kent, Ct. We established that company in 1974 and sold the firm in 2020. I am also a member of the advisory board for the HVRH (Housatonic Valley Regional High School) Vo-Ag department. We meet every other month with the staff of the Vo-Ag department as well as the school principals. At that meeting, we review the work that the teachers and students have accomplished since our last meeting. Our purpose is to maintain contact with the department and to align the needs of the agricultural business community with the education provided by the Staff of the Vo-Ag department .

I would like to support HB 5283, concerning the equal financial support for the VO-Ag institutions around the state. My business heavily depended on the graduates from that source of education to become the management level employees of my firm. The hands on approach to education is the future of education in my opinion. After running a business for 45 years, I have learned that education my staff in the "field" was far better than in the class room. Class room education is an important part of the education process but not the only approach.

The effort and support that these teachers give to their students is beyond anything that I have witnessed in the education arena. The support by the principals of the school is exceptional and consistent. Treating this level of education with equal financial rewards is essential for the health of the Vo-Ag education system and the success of the Agricultural businesses community around the state. Small Connecticut Towns are desperate to create opportunities for our children to returning to their home towns. This level of education presents local business opportunities to the students that will allow them to return as residents to support the schools, fire stations, and other volunteer efforts that keep our small towns running.

Thank you for your support of Raised Bill No 5283

Regards,

*Bruce Bennett*

West Cornwall, Ct